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SECRETARY RUSK: As you can see, I have not brought in any prepared script because I want to talk quite informally about some of the immediate hot spots that we have in our present world situation, and let me emphasize that my purpose is to provide background rather than spot news stories in order to try to dig into the essence of some of these problems.

It is still, I think, too early to assess the news from Algeria and from France. As a matter of fact, I haven't seen the news tickers in the last couple of hours on that subject. I think it is quite clear that the generals' revolt in Algeria was a surprise both to the French Government and to us. The French Government had been keeping considerable track of the generals who had indicated their disaffection, and it is hard to understand exactly how too much of an effort could have been organized without the knowledge of some of the French authorities.

Our own intelligence didn't alert us to this. Apparently it started on a very small scale in Algiers itself. We think that it is still too early to tell exactly how far this has gone in Algeria. There is some reason to think that all of the forces in Algeria have not joined the rebellion as claimed by the rebel generals, although that may be what happens in the course of the next day or two.

The seriousness of this from our point of view is that this is not a time when we can afford for France to be engaged in a deep civil war. There are very tense problems between the Sino-Soviet bloc and the free world, and it is important for NATO to be strong and unified and France does play, despite some of the rumors about General de Gaulle's attitude toward NATO, France does play a key role in the NATO position, beginning with the lines of communication that have been established through France and including the general political and military unity and solidarity of Western Europe.

This confusion, turmoil, in France obviously creates a position of weakness there for the time being, which is very important to try to correct. And I said try to correct--there are only limited means at our disposal for moving on it promptly, because this is a great internal problem of France itself, reaching to the very heart of that society.

Another real danger is that if the generals succeed in establishing either complete independence in Algeria or control in France and then resume the war in Algeria, then the prospects for settling that question on the long-term,workable basis would be, I think postponed for a considerable period.

We had considerable admiration for the courage and the long-range wisdom which had been shown by General de Gaulle in moving to work out his problems in Africa. One of our great preferences is that countries who find themselves with colonial territories which are moving inevitably toward independence should work out those relationships so that afterwards the relations between the metropolitan mother country and the newly-independent children would be as cordial as possible. The classic pattern on that has been, of course, established by the British. There are more British and more British investments, for example, in India today than while Britain was in command there.

France had moved with some speed in a number of the other African territories, and the new, independent countries of Africa, French-speaking, who have already entered the United Nations are countries that have, for the most part, good and workable relations with France. If the way could be opened for some similar adjustment between France and Algeria, this not only would make it possible for the French presence to remain in that important part of North Africa and on terms of harmony but it would provide additional links between North Africa and the rest of the world which would be extremely valuable, and then the way would be also open

for close association among the North African states as then pictured--Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco--in a loose association of some sort which could provide a very important, cohesive force there in that part of the Continent.

I think that is about all that I can say on that at the moment in the absence of later information.

I think--I am not quite certain of this--that we have just begun to re-establish communications with our people in Algiers, and we may have something more on it before your meeting adjourns.

Another place in the news today is Laos. This morning early the British and the Russian Ambassadors called upon me here in the Department to deliver three pieces of information: One, a communication addressed to the authorities in Laos on a cease-fire; secondly, a communication to Mr. Nehru to reconvene the International Controls Commission for Laos that was established under the 1954 accords; and, third, an invitation to a conference on the 12th of May in Geneva of the fourteen nations indicated by Prince Sihanouk, those members of the Geneva Conference of 1954 plus the three governments that are members of the ICC--that is, Canada, Poland, and India, plus Thailand and I think Vietnam, making up the fourteen--and Cambodia and Thailand, excuse me, making

up the fourteen nations, Vietnam having been there already.

The problem here is the cease-fire. I believe the document itself will be published tomorrow, and the document itself will say that a cease-fire before the meeting of the conference. As far as that language is concerned, this is not very precise or satisfactory. But in further negotiations--and this must be BACKGROUND--in further negotiations between the British and the Russians it was understood that the cease-fire was to take effect as soon as possible on the ground.

Now, what will probably happen is that the Government itself in Laos will itself declare a cease-fire, and then see what the other side does, because what is envisaged is that representatives of the two sides will get together at some point and work out some--whatever arrangements are needed to police or patrol a cease-fire.

The problem was that if these negotiations on a cease-fire on the physical arrangements were to be protracted while shooting continued, then the situation would continue to deteriorate and there would be no possibility for negotiations or a conference to try to brint this thing to an end.

If the other side does not accept a cease-fire immediately, then we are confronted with the problem of

what to do about it. We have been trying to follow two tracks simultaneously. One of them is to explore the possibilities of negotiation which would bring this situation to a conclusion with an independent and neutral Laos. Failing that, to get action through SEATO to prevent the fall of Laos to communism represented by the Pathet Lao armed minority backed by the Russian airlift and Vietminh personnel from North Vietnam.

The situation has not been very satisfactory on the ground for a variety of factors. One of them has been, quite frankly, that it has been difficult to get the essential elements of morale on the government side and on the part of the government troops to make it possible to take effective action without large-scale intervention from the outside. The problem of supply to the government forces has not been a real one. They have had all the supplies that they have needed. They have had transport. They have had training and technical assistance. They have had tactical advice. But in a country where fighting has not been customary and in a country where loyalties are diffused to people and to tribal groupings, in effect, there has not been present there a strong nationalist feeling on which it has been possible to build effective resistance.

The situation is not quite as gloomy as all that, because there are those--some there who are both willing to fight and who seem capable of fighting, but the problem has been all along that given these relatively small forces in a very large country, a few shots have made a big battle, and the kind of fighting that has gone on has been more at arm's length and the government forces have not entered into the fight with great determination.

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The test will come when in the next day or two, after the government has declared its adherence to the cease-fire--the test will come in terms of what the other side then does about it; what the other side continues to do. If they continue to press, then SEATO countries will have to proceed to take the measures which have been discussed among the SEATO countries to try to prevent the Pathet-Lao forces from overrunning that country.

I think there is one encouraging aspect in that situation; that is, that since the Bangkok Conference there has been a unity of view on the part of the SEATO countries on the necessity of preventing that country from being overrun by the Communist forces.

Let me say this quite frankly: We ourselves do not have an independent ambition of our own in Laos; that is, we are not looking for an allied Laos in that situation. If you will remember your map, you will see, however, that Laos borders on Thailand and on Cambodia and on South Vietnam. The fall of Laos to Communism would drop the battle still farther south and under still more disadvantageous circumstances, and would directly threaten the security of the rest of Southeast Asia. But we do not need Laos as a military ally linked to the West in the terms on which we are linked with many others on a

treaty basis. If we could provide in Laos a sort of buffer situation, that would meet our own present security problems.

Now the principal governments concerned have agreed that an Austrian-type Laos is acceptable; that is, they have agreed to those words, to those expressions.

The problem now comes as to whether we can, in fact, get something on the ground that is a realistic representation of an Austrian-type Laos. Let us not be under any illusion that if we get to negotiations, if the cease-fire does become effective, and if we can go into a conference--let us not be under any illusions that these negotiations will be very simple. But they will be very difficult, and it will be hard, at the moment, to predict if there can be a successful outcome or not. But that is roughly the situation there.

Now in terms of Cuba let me just make a few comments there. I think most of you have seen the news reports on the entire background of that situation. Let me add a few comments on the situation more or less as of today.

The landing was, as you know now, not a landing in large force, but a considerable band of Cubans who had been trained over a period of time just for the problem, and were going back to Cuba for the purpose of attempting to set off a large-scale reaction against the Castro

Government. We and other governments, of course, as everyone now knows, did help them in their training and their equipment. But we did not order them into Cuba. These cubans were young men of great determination who were most insistent about going back there. The real decision was up to them. They would have no other answer, although we must take full responsibility for our part in it. And they knew exactly what they were getting into except for one or two points.

There was a very considerable miscalculation on both the Cuban and the American side on two vital issues: One was whether there could be or would be a substantial response from inside Cuba, which could link up with these people and help move the situation to a a complete success. The other was the pace and extent and weight of Soviet Bloc arms, which had already reached Cuba and were in operational condition.

I think these two things were fairly critical to the problem.

The group that got ashore ran into much heavier and much quicker opposition than was anticipated. Either there was not the general preparation which the Cuban underground had assured was there, or the Castro security forces moved in far more promptly and put a block on the situation much more effectively than was

indicated from inside Cuba. A considerable number of these men have been captured, a considerable number have become guerrillas, and a considerable number have been taken off in boats, including some rescued by the United States of those who were caught on the beach or trapped along the beaches, and could not get in to join any of the guerrillas.

Now this was undoubtedly a setback, and I would not wish to pretend that it was anything else. And what we do and what we are going to have to do more than once is we are going to have to pick ourselves up and go on from here. And there is no one, in the United States Government anyhow, who is underestimating the unfortunate setback which has been represented in this particular enterprise. There are lessons to be learned. We are looking hard at those lessons to see just what they are and what they mean, and what this means for the future.

I will say, on two points, that we have been pleased that certain things have happened as a result of this gallant effort on the part of these Cubans. I think the crystallization of opinion in Latin America is going on very fast. It has been very difficult in this last year or so to get quite a few of the Latin American Governments to face up to the nature of this penetration

of this hemisphere. If out of this Cuban affair comes a clearer recognition of what the problem is, and a more serious approach to it, that would be, in itself, a very strong advantage. And, secondly, there has not been as strong a negative reaction in other parts of the world among governments as might have been predicted on the basis of this sort of failure.

But, except for the Latin American point, those are not very great help in sort of minimizing the serious disadvantages of what has recently occurred.

Let me just make one point, and, that is, that it is not the intention or the attitude or the desire of the present Administration to share with President Eisenhower any responsibility for whatever decisions were made in this recent situation in Cuba. There have been some comments which were interpreted that way. That is not the attitude of President Kennedy; it is not the attitude of any of us in the Administration; and, indeed, President Eisenhower was not consulted since January 20 in terms of what should be done about this particular situation. The responsibilities belong to this Administration. This particular group had been in training for quite a period, reaching back to last year, but there was every opportunity for the present Administration to chose the lines of action, which it thought

were considered under all circumstances.

Now this was a very complex computation of problems, as to whether to let these fellows do what they wanted to do. The problem in Cuba was serious. There seemed to be a race going on between growing dissatisfaction among the Cubans, as reported out of Cuba by various means; and the growing control of the Castro apparatus over the Cuban people. Which one of those races would win was speculative.

It was thought that the strengthening of the apparatus would get to a point where it would be difficult for any popular resistance to make itself felt. Indeed, apparently, that point was passed before these particular people became active.

I comment on that because the problems ahead of us with respect to Cuba are far more formidable than they would have been, of course, had the people of Cuba been inclined or been fired to take things in their own hands in the situation and prepare a new situation in that country.

The United States did not, from the beginning, expect to commit its own forces to use armed intervention in Cuba. Had there been a substantial popular revolt and had this thing gotten ahead headway, and a new government could have established itself there which could have been

recognized and supported, this would, of course, have been a real possibility--that kind of support. But, in the absence of a real popular response, the prospect of the United States going into Cuba under the circumstances existing at the time, to use the U. S. forces to subdue a population and overthrow a regime, was one which was not considered wise or possible or practical.

I think that is about all that I will say at the present time on this Cuban situation.

Let me just mention the Congo. The Congo is a potentially critical point because what happens there in the Congo in the center of Africa could have a great deal of bearing on all of Central Africa.

When the Congolese became independent on very short notice, without adequate preparation, without a strong nationalist feeling which pulled them together as a nation, a rapid deterioration, of course, set in. The United Nations was actually coming there to try to prevent civil war, to try to maintain an effective administrative machinery in the country; and, if possible, to get what is a potentially productive country into production and get its economy moving.

There have been several problems there. One of them has been that the governments of the United Nations, although most of them strongly supported the

presence of the U. N. in the Congo, have found it difficult to get together on what the U. N. policy itself should be. There has been a lack of clarity in the U. N. mandate in the Congo, which has made it difficult for the Secretary General and for his representatives in the Congo to know just what to do, and under what circumstances. We think the resolution of the Security Council, which was the last formal action on that point some weeks ago--we think that resolution improved the situation. But we still have yet to find the best way to bring all of the opposing factions together, even those outside of the Soviet Bloc, to bring them together on a sufficiently clear and precise policy to give the Secretary General clear marching orders under a given circumstance.

The tribal and personal rivalries in the Congo have greatly complicated the building of a genuinely national Congolese Government, whether federal or confederal or unitarial integrated. At the present time, there are two favorable trends; and one threat which has to be watched very closely.

The one favorable trend is the continuing discussion among the Congolese leaders about the form and structure of the government of that country, and the relations among the various provinces to each other

within a Congolese State. Those discussions, I believe, are resuming today. And we think that that type of talk has been, on the whole, very useful, and has laid the basis for cooperation among the principal leaders of the Congo. Gizenga is not there, I am told, but the others can make some headway, we hope, in moving toward some sort of decent political settlement.

Secondly, I think that the tensions which have existed between the U. N. on the one side, and the Congolese leaders and forces on the other, have been reduced somewhat in recent days by a series of talks and negotiations and adjustments, whereby, we hope that the U. N. forces and the Congolese forces will be working more closely together, and that the U. N. will be in a position to help train and to some extent reorganize and assist the Congolese forces in the interest of not only maintaining law within the provinces, but in cooperating across provincial lines.

There is not much at the moment to say on the restoration of the economic life of the country, but we hope very much that that can be done.

Well, these are certain of the hotter spots at the moment, and you will be hearing something about some of them from my other colleagues as they come in to visit with you.

Let me make just one closing comment before I return to join President Sukarno and his party. I want to emphasize the remark that I made this morning about the world-wide involvements of United States policy, and the complications which this means for the United States in working out its own policy. We are not in the position of a small country, such as, say, Denmark or Ceylon, whose policy can be quite clear and simple. For a variety of reasons, we are involved in every important situation in any part of the world:

First, because of our own national interests--and these include an attempt to do everything that we can to meet the Sino-Soviet offensive which is going on all over the world.

Secondly, because the United States power and influence is very large, and the United States policy is the object, I would suppose a primary object, of almost every foreign office in the world. There are many questions which come up: West New Guinea is one--one of dozens and dozens. There are many questions which come up in which we may not have a national stake of great importance, as far as we see it from our point of view, but all we would like to see is a settlement. This happens week by week all over the world. And where

disputes occur between friends of ours, between someone in Africa, someone in Europe, and someone in the Middle East, or between two Latin American Republics--the object of both parties in disputes of this sort is to win the support of the United States in behalf of their position. We are constantly in the middle, therefore, and we will continue to be in the middle on problems where all that we would like to do is to find a settlement between the parties.

I am reminded of the luxurious position that the British Government was in sometime in 1947-'48 with regard to Palestine. They announced systematically and regularly for a considerable period that they would accept any solution which was acceptable to both the Jews and to the Arabs. [Laughter] We would like very much to be able to do it, but can't quite get away with it.

Another reason, I think, is that we are a member, and albeit a leading member, of a very large number of international organizations, who have on their agenda thousands upon thousands of items throughout the year on which we have to take a position of some sort. Today, I suppose, there would be from 12 to 20 international meetings going on somewhere in the world in which we are officially represented with a delegate, with staff, and

with positions on the items on the agenda. This goes on right through every working day throughout the year. It is an activity of the utmost importance, for the most part, because that part of it which does not meet the headlines, the great political issues such as occur, say, at the General Assembly of the United Nations, nevertheless, is getting on with the week-by-week and month-by-month work of the world in a great variety of fashions. But it makes it necessary for us to take an interest in and have a responsible attitude toward literally thousands of questions right throughout the year.

I think it is also important to bear in mind that our commitment to freedom is itself universal, if you like, and relatively simple; but, applied to a complex world situation, creates complications of policy. For example, the American people really do believe that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. This is a scarlet thread of American policy that explains a good many of our attitudes as we approach our foreign policy questions. And this is why, for example, we have an instinctive attitude toward issues of colonial independence.

There are more than 60 independent members in the General Assembly of the United Nations today--more

than 60 who were at one time or another part of a Western political system. I think you will find that if you look at those 60 that American influence over that experience has been strongly in support of the independence which these members have achieved. We get diverted from time to time, and we get off into bypaths here and there, but the great long-range weight of American policy has been in the direction of independence for peoples who find themselves governed by peoples of another sort or from a distant place.

This is also why we are concerned about what is going on in the Soviet Union and in Central Europe. It is why we do not like Communism and the Communist apparatus of control. It is why we think it is important that no country has ever accepted Communism through a free election of its people. This is why we draw instinctively to other democracies in our foreign relations with other people; why we are sometimes nervous about the company we sometimes keep and the close associates we sometimes have, whose institutions are autocratic or undemocratic. This is why we are deeply concerned about some of our failures here in our own society who do not live up to our aspirations.

Now when we get involved in a controversy, say, between a member of NATO, such as, say Belgium,

and a colonial territory in Africa, it is difficult for the Africans to understand that NATO also is a part of our commitment to freedom, and that our commitment to freedom is not just on the one issue but has to do with what is happening in Central Europe and the threat which the Sino-Soviet Bloc is posing to freedom all over the world.

These are complicating elements.

Let me close then with one other comment.

When the President talks about the urgency and the critical nature of the present period--and I think he has referred to the late fifties and the early sixties--underlying that is a recognition of the vast changes that are going on all over the world, changes many of which would be occurring were there no Sino-Soviet Bloc. But it is also true that beginning about the mid fifties the Sino-Soviet Bloc has added to their basic power apparatus and techniques--they have added to the Stalinist kind of confrontation new skills, new techniques, and new resources, particularly in the great underdeveloped parts of the world--in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and they are, of course, penetrating as they can in Latin America.

Now this great outflanking effort by the Sino-Soviet Bloc of the bastions of power of the Free World, Western Europe and North America--this great outflanking

effort is a problem of the utmost seriousness. And this is one of the reasons why we are trying to put emphasis upon recapturing, to a degree, some of the leadership of some of our own revolutions--the revolutions of independence, and the revolutions of economic and social development. But it is going to take a lot of effort and a lot of time, and it is going to take a lot of new inspiration on the part of leaders of some of these other countries to try to take steps themselves to reach out and get the energy and enthusiasm and interest of their own peoples. But this is a struggle in which the stakes are very high, and we are going to be with it for some time.

I have no doubt myself that in the long run, in terms of what things are really important to people, that the American people see things, as do most common people in most parts of the world.

Now the problem is not whether our nation is out to get things that distress or defy the opinions of mankind. Our problems are more tactical in nature: in the sense that it is difficult to meet those who have contempt for law through lawful processes; it is difficult to meet under democratic regimes, those who would undermine it through undemocratic methods. These are problems which need extremely urgent attention; they are

getting it not only here but in other places, other countries. But the struggle is no less than the struggle for freedom itself.

Now these are just some passing comments, and I hope very much that as you talk with colleagues in the course of these two days that we can explore some of them further.

I am looking forward very much to seeing you this afternoon at our reception at six o'clock.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

[Secretary Rusk left the room at this time.]

MR. TUBBY: We will have a luncheon recess.

There is an executive cafeteria which is set aside for your use. The signs are posted out there to direct you to it. We also have taxis alerted to pick you up--those of you who want to eat downtown.

The afternoon session will start at two o'clock sharp.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:35 p.m., the meeting was recessed for lunch, to be reconvened at 2:00 p.m.]

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